

ADDRESS AT THE ONE HUNDRETH ANNUAL MEETING  
OF THE GREATER PROVIDENCE YMCA  
MAY 14, 1953

When Governor Sherman Adams, on behalf of Mr. Colt, told me of the invitation to come to Providence, I answered that I was not in the speech-making business. My job was to get just as little publicity and as much anonymity as possible. Also I reminded him that as Head of the Central Intelligence Agency I keep entirely out of politics.

Governor Adams, who is doing a great job in Washington, is a very persuasive man. He told me this was not a political occasion. It was a chance, he said, to talk on a subject which he knew I had been studying, namely, what was happening to the youth in the Soviet dominated areas of the world and what the Communists were trying to do to youth, even in the free countries.

So I accepted your kind invitation and am glad to have this chance of being with you on this significant anniversary in the work of the YMCA.

My son, a veteran of Korea, has often put this question to me, and in various forms I have had the same kind of inquiry from many others of his generation. The question is this: Why is it that the Communists seem to be so successful in getting the fanatical support of their youth behind a cause we all know to be false? And why is it that in many of the countries of the free West that same dynamic force seems to be lacking in the younger generation?

Note that I said, "seem to be successful." I do not accept the implication of the question. I recognize that appearances justify it and I concede that the answer is not an easy one.

The reason why the West appears to come off second best in this comparison varies from country to country as we look at the Free World. Take certain countries of Western Europe, for example.

It is hard for us to appreciate the extent to which two world wars, 1914 and 1939, sapped the strength of Europe by decimating its youth. If at times we feel that there is a lack of vigorous leadership in some European countries, we must realize that the very best of European youth perished in World War I, which for countries like France, England, and Italy was more costly in terms of casualties, than even World War II. It is the men lost in Flanders Field and at Verdun who would be the political leaders of Western Europe today if they had survived. Their loss in turn has affected the younger generation of today.

Then too in some of these European countries, and here Germany can be added with particular force, an idea of another war is unbearable for both the older and the younger generation. Many want to have nothing to do with anything warlike, even preparation for defense.

In other countries more remote from the immediate danger, although they too are threatened by it, it is hard, particularly for the younger generation, to appreciate the great peril of the moment. This is true to some extent in the United States, despite the war in Korea.

Russia, and China too, suffered grievously in recent wars and yet the young men there seem all too ready to sacrifice themselves for the State and even for new military adventures. How has this come about?

The Soviet leaders have somehow managed to capitalize on the disillusionment of youth in the period between the World Wars and particularly after World War II. They well understood the instinctive desire

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of youth to devote themselves, and even to sacrifice themselves, for a cause, particularly a cause that involves mass youth movements. Such movements seem to have far more appeal in the Slav countries and the countries of Eastern Europe than, say, in Anglo Saxon countries where the feeling of individual responsibility is highly developed.

But even in the United States the strange ideology of Communism seemed to have a surprising appeal to youth in the post-war, post-depression era of the 30's - and to an extent that is not yet fully known.

Where youth is insecure there is a tendency to join mass movements, to accept discipline and direction. The Communist leaders have cleverly traded on the desire of youth to be led.

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In the Communist world there is a carefully worked out system of youth indoctrination which molds many of them into being slaves of the system. Unfortunately their fanaticism -- evidenced, for example, among many of the Communists we hold as prisoners of war in Korea -- is not less dangerous because it is synthetically created.

The Soviet policy toward youth is clearly illustrated by the pattern of youth organizations which has been established not only in the Soviet Union but also in every country which has come under Communist rule. In the Soviet Union there is a succession of youth organizations. Non-Communist youth organizations have long since been disbanded and most of their members forced into the common mold.

The Communist youth organizations are mass organizations. Membership for most is automatic at the outset with successive steps of weeding out as the young people grow up. Children -- both boys and girls -- are taken

into the Octobrists before they are eight. At 10 or 11 they "graduate" into the Young Pioneers (of whom there are some 13,000,000) which keeps them until they are 14 - 16. The next step is into the Komsomol, the elite youth organization of some 9,000,000 from whom eventual party membership is drawn.

At every stage the emphasis is on discipline and Communist principle even for the youngest for whom a favorite puppet show is "Big Ivan." Big Ivan is a huge blind peasant who stands for the Russian people oppressed by little men labeled Czar, General, Priest, and Kulak. An owl finally cures Ivan's blindness. In the end Ivan kills his tormentors and destroys their palaces and churches.

As the final result of this indoctrination of youth the Communist Party attempts to draw upon a thoroughly disciplined and fanatically dedicated Komsomol for its own membership.

The over-all youth program is closely coordinated with the educational system, the sports programs and the military demands upon the youth. Even the careers of Soviet youths are rigidly controlled and entry into the restricted categories of technician or specialist is limited to those with a good youth record. Membership in the Komsomol generally determines admission of students to universities, and without the approval of the youth organization, it is not possible to enter into a profession. Often even a young man's calling is chosen for him.

In reality the young people in the Soviet Union have little freedom of choice. Taken at an impressionable age, they hear only one doctrine. They are taught the infallibility of their leadership and their press. Is it strange that so many of them come to believe only in the Soviet

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ideal? Particularly since they are largely deprived of the religious influence which might serve as an antidote for Communist materialism?

Not all of the Soviet youth, by any means, are conscious that they are the victims of coercion in their regimented organizations. On the contrary, knowing no other sorts of youth activities most of them have come to consider it a privilege to be included in those that are available, the more so because of the tangible rewards for the future held out to the Komsomol youth and the party member. It is this apparent enthusiasm, in the absence of conscious choice, that makes Communist fanaticism the more dangerous.

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The systems that prevail in the European satellites do not differ substantially from those in the Soviet Union itself. The Communist program seems to achieve a high degree of success among the children in the six to fourteen age group, but in the older group, say between 14 and 25, there is a large degree of apathy to Communist indoctrination. In countries such as Poland and Czechoslovakia the older age group still remembers the days of freedom, and indoctrination of the children there is not easy.

In fact, some youth revolt from it, particularly resenting the system of espionage and denunciation that pervades life in the European satellites of the Soviet. The bold Polish MIG-15 pilot, Lt. Franciszek Jarecki, who recently defected to Denmark is an example of this. In a statement that he made a few days ago he said this:

"I had determined to get out of Poland long before I was able to fly a MIG, because life under Communism sickened me. Nobody paid me to escape. For years, even after I joined the air force, I didn't have a single real friend. I didn't want the kind of friend who would be spying on me, as I myself had been asked to spy on others. \*\*\*\*"

"Yes, sir," he goes on to say, "we are all fed up with the never ending lies and idolizing of the Soviets and I can assure you if there was only a little more chance a huge majority of the Polish flyers would escape to the West."

The anti-religious theme, of course, is particularly stressed in youth training. For example in Estonia the Central Committee of the Komsomol recently circulated a pamphlet entitled "The Ten Commandments of Communism" to combat religious resistance to regimentation:

1. Never forget that the clergy are the greatest enemies of the Communist state.
2. Try to convert your friends to Communism.
3. Advise your friends to avoid clergymen and Christians.
4. Beware of spies! Denounce saboteurs!
5. Distribute atheistic literature among the population.
6. A good Komsomol youth is a fighter for the cause of atheism.
7. Fight the religious element wherever you can prevent its influence on your comrade.
8. A good godless youth must also be a good policeman.
9. The godless movement grows also by means of monetary contributions.
10. If you are not a convinced adherent of the godless movement, you cannot be a good Communist and Soviet citizen.

The prominence given to news on youth organizations in the Communist press shows how seriously youth indoctrination is taken. Yet in some of the satellites it is interesting to note that the Communists have had to admit partial failure as a result of over-zealousness. They have had to cut back the doses of Marxism that are administered and substitute more emphasis on mass sport programs, generally with a militaristic background, including flying and gliding exercises, parachute training, and the like.

Just the other day, on April 24th, the Communist Czech Government ordered a sharp reduction in certain of the political education activities. The 5,000 young people a month that have joined the flight from East Germany to Berlin is evidence of the continuing distaste with which young Germans are reacting to the Communist indoctrination they are receiving. In March of this year 10% of those fleeing to Western Berlin were in the age group 14 -25; in April this figure had risen to 15%.

In China the Communists had penetrated the student movement long before they came into power. Skilled agitators, on the basis of experience gained in the 20's, laid the groundwork during the long war with Japan. Upon this foundation the Communists were able to erect a student movement which materially helped them to national power. This movement, known as the All-China Student Federation, was fully organized by March, 1949, six months before the Communist regime formally proclaimed its takeover of the Chinese government. The strength of the Federation has allowed it to reach abroad and spark the penetration of Southeast Asia student movements, playing upon the deep-seated connection which links overseas Chinese with the land of their fathers.

Alongside the student movement the Chinese Communists have created other youth groups, very similar to those in the Soviet Union, with the Young Pioneers gathering in the children of 8 to 15 years and the all-embracing New Democratic Youth Corps taking the older ones. Here, as in the Soviet Union and in the European Satellites, the emphasis is upon iron discipline, and, of course, complete devotion to the regime.

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Side by side with the youth organizations within the Soviet Union and other Communist countries, there have been developed, "for external use only," international front organizations for youth and students. Their purpose is to influence the youth of the free world and to impress them with a picture of strength and solidarity among Communist youth. Two of the most important of these front organizations are The World Federation of Democratic Youth and the International Union of Students.

These two organizations are the vehicles of Soviet youth policy outside of the areas controlled by the Communist governments. Those who are responsible for Communist youth policy on both sides of the Iron Curtain are not troubled by the demands of consistency. This is shown in the stark contrast in attitudes toward military service. Behind the Iron Curtain the youth organizations work constantly to integrate their members into the military system of the Communist countries. For example, the Hungarian youth organization issued a statement to its members on the 7th of May 1952 telling them that their primary task was mental and physical preparation for defense. On almost the same day The World Federation of Democratic Youth, whose headquarters are in Budapest, issued a call to all youth in the Western World to join in a conference which it labeled "For the Defense of the Rights of Youth."



This Congress, according to its Budapest headquarters, promoted the idea that youth should be allowed to exercise its inalienable rights to continue education unhampered by any demand for armed service and that youth should demand that armament expenditures be reduced and that the money saved should be given towards scholarships. This appeal to pacifism and exhortation to refuse military service was, of course, limited to the youth of Western countries.

For youth in areas like the Middle East, Southeast Asia and the free Far East, the Communists advocate still another course. In those areas Communist international front organizations have called on youth to "fight for peace with weapons in their hands." The Communist youth organizations have been training their members in Southeast Asia in guerrilla tactics and in the use of arms to participate in uprisings against constituted governments of the area.

At large Communist youth festivals, such as the 1951 rally in Berlin, the delegates from the Communist guerrilla forces of Greece, Malaya, North Korea and Viet Nam are always given the most honored place and their active rebellion against non-Communist governments was held up as the finest example of youth activity.

On the day that the new Japanese treaty went into effect, the Communists started a bloody riot against foreign military forces in Japan. The hard core of Communists who incited the riot were students from Japanese universities. They shouted slogans against American military forces stationed in Japan and demanded an end to U. S. military installations in that country. At the very same time the Communist youth organizations in East Germany were glorifying the Soviet military forces stationed in their country.

From all this it is clear that the Soviets intend that youth organizations be used not for the development of its individual members but for the furtherance of Soviet foreign policy, whatever that policy may be in a particular area. In the Communist areas, that policy calls for youth to participate in military training, in Western Europe the policy demands that youth be pacifists, and in the East that youth participate in active rebellion and sabotage.

At given times the men who control the Communist youth apparatus stage special events to show their power and to attempt to frighten the West by parading samples of the millions of young people whom they can get to dance to their tune. The World Federation of Democratic Youth, which claims 78,000,000 members throughout the world, and The International Union of Students, which claims 5,000,000 student members, together sponsored a series of mass demonstrations in Berlin in August of 1951 which were truly frightening by their size alone. These Berlin demonstrations were labeled by their sponsors "A Youth Festival for Peace." They could more accurately be described as a threat to the free government in Western Germany.

This political demonstration in East Germany was probably the most expensive youth rally of our time. Over a million German youths were transported to Berlin in scores of railway trains and every other means of conveyance to demonstrate "loyalty" to Communism and the Soviet Union. They were joined in military type parades, shouting slogans, by over 25,000 foreign youths who were brought to Berlin from all corners of the world, without charge to themselves. The entire bill was footed by the Communist governments of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. The cost must have been tens of millions of dollars. During the two weeks that

the rally lasted there was not a single business meeting or public discussion in which any of the youth delegates could participate. There were many speeches, but always by the leaders of the Communist youth organizations, not by the youth delegates.

But even this Berlin spectacle had its kickback for the Soviet Union, thanks to our able High Commissioner, Mr. John J. McCloy. Almost a million of the Communist youth visited the Free Western Sector of Berlin in direct violation of orders. Probably they went there to jeer, but they stayed to wonder. Many of them wanted to stay permanently. They were shown the sights of the free city of Western Berlin. The most impressive sight they saw was the American High Commissioner himself who sat down with large groups of these students, heard their problems and answered their questions candidly and fully. Word of this spread throughout the entire youth festival and was an impressive contrast to Communist techniques of permitting no free discussion of youth problems at the Rally.

The latest Communist youth rallies in areas exposed to the outside world, such as Berlin and Vienna, have been less and less successful, and the Communists have become alerted to the danger of exposing their indoctrinated youth to an alternative way of life. Recently they staged a so-called world-wide youth conference in the Russian sector of Vienna under the high sounding title of Conference on the Defense of the Rights of Youth. To hide the Communist character of the sponsorship of this conference, many non-Communist organizations were invited, even the international YMCA. The meeting was largely a failure.

This summer behind the Iron Curtain these Communist front groups are staging four more mammoth conferences, one of which is called the Fourth World Youth Festival for Peace. A letter written by an East German

to a friend in the United States while he was temporarily in West Germany throws a somewhat sinister light on what the Soviet mean by stressing peace in their youth organizations. "The teen-agers," this German boy writes, "are given preliminary training by the association for sport and techniques, including glider flying, shooting, and other service preparatory to entering the Army, Navy, or Air Force."

Everywhere throughout the Soviet orbit the propaganda word is peace, but the preparation is for war.

It is well, it seems to me, that we should understand what communism is doing to youth. Dangerous as it is we should not conclude that there is no answer. All Communist youth is not convinced or fanatical. Youth in the Soviet Union, despite appearances, is, over-all, possibly less fanatical than in some of the countries where Communism is newer. Some Soviet youth have seen the disillusionment of their parents who themselves had gone through Communist youth training. Youth in the Satellites and in China have not seen this.

The Communist masters of the youth program have learned one lesson we should take to heart. In dealing with youth they have seen the usefulness of discipline, coupled with serious attention to the individual members of the organization. They use this as a means of achieving high morale and obedience. Discipline, if applied on sound principles, can help create morale based on pride in a common experience. In some instances the more severe the discipline the higher the Communist morale. Sometimes it is more effective to demand severely of people than to promise them too much and to cater to their wishes.

The moral of this, as I see it, is that we Americans are apt to underrate the importance in youth training of organizational principles. For this reason we tend to attribute Soviet successes too much to ideological training and too little to the fact that they have studied carefully and applied consistently the basic principles of human organization and discipline.

It is great organizations like the Y.M.C.A. which can help to instill the proper principles of discipline and at the same time protect the freedom of the individual.

Finally it is important that we should appreciate that the youth of the non-Communist world are looking more and more to American youth for inspiration and guidance. The Y.M.C.A., with its ties with youth groups throughout the world, has a unique opportunity to join with the youth of the Free World and to lend moral and other support. This is particularly true in the Middle East and Asia, which have only recently gained their independence, and where the youth are looking for some guiding inspiration.

If we do not take this opportunity, many of the world's youth may, by default, slip under the influence of those sinister Communist front groups, whose mission, under the guise of peace, is preparation for further conquest.